

Useful News Clips for SAAM Messaging

About this Document

This resource document contains a series of short segments on the topic of Sexual Assault that can be published during Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). These messaging ideas can be published in your local base newspaper or bulletin as a series or individually. Feel free to expand on what is written and tailor some of the information to your local installation. We encourage you to use the information to remind people about the Military Services' Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Programs and the services available to help those who have experienced trauma.

SAPR Program

Department-wide

Sexual assaults are a challenge to our nation, and the military is not immune to this challenge. In CY 2004, there were 1700 reported sexual assaults within the military. Sexual assaults are detrimental to mission readiness and conflict with the core values of each Military Service. Needless to say, sexual assault will not be tolerated in the Department.

The Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, or SAPR Program, incorporates new policy that represents fundamental change for the Military Services. Confidentiality and restricted reporting are examples of the strong steps forward that have been taken to address sexual assault. The goals of the SAPR Program are threefold:

1. To prevent sexual assaults through education and training
2. To ensure that active duty service members who are sexually assaulted are protected, treated with dignity and respect, and receive appropriate and responsive care
3. To hold perpetrators of such assaults accountable

Local Resources

The intent of the Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, beyond preventing sexual assaults, is to ensure that regardless of where a victim is assigned there will be local resources to give that victim the best care. To provide a consistent level of care and treatment for victims mandatory, essential training tasks have been established for those personnel who respond to sexual assaults. These personnel are part of larger disciplines that are commonly referred to as 'response groups' in the SAPR Program. Response groups include: Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates (VAs); Healthcare Providers; Law Enforcement and Criminal Investigators; Judge Advocates; and, Chaplains.

SARCs serve as the center of gravity for each installation's sexual assault prevention and response program. They serve as the single point of contact to coordinate sexual assault victim care and to track the services provided to the victim from initial report of a sexual assault through disposition and resolution of the victim's health and well-being.

While the SARC primarily provides system advocacy, the VA provides 24/7 direct response to victims. VAs assist victims in navigating the military's response network. They are not counselors, therapists, or investigators. VAs furnish accurate and comprehensive information on available options and resources so the victim can make informed decisions when managing their personal information.

SAAM Overview

Nationally, April is observed as Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) as a way to raise awareness about sexual assault and to promote prevention of sexual violence through special events and public education. The Department of

Defense (DoD) theme for 2006 SAAM is: Sexual Assault Prevention Begins With You. This slogan serves to remind us that each of us can play a role - as a leader, a teacher, a friend or co-worker - in sexual assault prevention. New DoD policies addressing sexual assault prevention and response seek to establish a climate of confidence in which:

- ✓ sexual assault and the attitudes that promote it are not tolerated
- ✓ victims of sexual assault receive the care and support that they need
- ✓ the offenders are held accountable for their actions

You are encouraged to learn more about the issue of sexual assault and what you can do to prevent it by participating in local SAAM activities.

Prevalence of Sexual Assault

"In the United States, a rape is reported about once every five minutes."

-FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2000

"1 in 33 men (3%) and 1 in 6 women (17%) reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives."

-National Institute of Justice, 2000

"Nearly 70 percent of victims know their attacker."

-2003 National Crime Victimization Survey

"In calendar year 2004 there were 1,700 reported sexual assaults in the Military Services. 123 of these occurred in the Area of Responsibility (AOR)."

- DoD CY04 Annual Report to Congress - Sexual Assault in the Military Services

"Out of the 1,700 reported sexual assaults - there were 104 reported assaults on men."

-DoD CY04 Annual Report to Congress - Sexual Assault in the Military Services

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SAPRO

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Office

www.sapr.mil

Sexual assault has long-term effects on victims and military units. The Department is committed to preventing sexual assault. We have put in place a reporting structure with specific guidelines and protocols, so all assault cases are responded to appropriately and that the investigations of sexual assaults are timely, effective and sensitive to the victim's needs.

When confronting the crime of sexual assault in the Department, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program is addressing a societal issue. Common values such as honor, courage, Service before self, and country, unite every service member and utterly contradict the actions that sustain sexual misconduct.

Each service member should continue to be environmentally aware, addressing any behaviors that inadvertently or directly facilitate harassment or assault.

Sexual assault prevention begins with you.

Restricted/Unrestricted Reporting

Under the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program, reporting procedures have changed dramatically. Confidentiality represents the most significant single change in sexual assault policy, and it addresses a major barrier to reporting. Many victims are not emotionally prepared for a criminal investigation due to fear, embarrassment, shame, and sense of violation that follows an assault. Restricted reporting provides a viable reporting option to those who in the past have foregone medical care to avoid being involved in a criminal investigation.

Restricted reporting allows victims to confidentially receive medical treatment and support without automatically triggering a criminal investigation. This reporting option provides victims with more control over the release of their personal information and affords them additional time to weigh their options and seek guidance about whether or not to participate in a criminal investigation. The Sexual Assault

Suggested Publication Timeline

- ✓ **SAPR Program**
- Distribute two weeks prior to SAAM
Two-part series
1. Department-wide
2. Local Resources
- ✓ **Sexual Assault Awareness Month Overview**
- Distribute one week prior to SAAM
- ✓ **Prevalence of Sexual Assault**
- Distribute 1st week of SAAM
- ✓ **Restricted/Unrestricted Reporting**
- Distribute 2nd week of SAAM
- ✓ **Training and Education—
A Career Long Commitment**
- Distribute 3rd week of SAAM

Response Coordinator (SARC) or Victim Advocate (VA) is responsible for advising the victim of the reporting options available to him or her, explaining the benefits and limitations of each, explaining the exceptions that can apply to restricted reporting, and documenting the reporting option the victim selects.

Victims who desire treatment and/or support, as well as an investigation, can select unrestricted reporting. This reporting option follows the protocol used previously – medical treatment, counseling, command authority notification and investigation.

By increasing a victim's reporting options and improving a victim's access to services, the Department hopes to create a "climate of confidence" in which service members will trust that the system will respond appropriately when reporting a sexual assault and support their recovery.

Training and Education— A Career Long Commitment

Education and training are key to the success of the Department's Sexual Assault

Prevention and Response Program. Training has been directed for all uniform members and civilians who supervise military. It has been incorporated into all entry points to include the academies as well as leadership development and Professional Military Education programs.

Standard training definitions for sexual assault and sexual harassment are cornerstones of the Department's training program. These terms have been used interchangeably, perpetuating the gray area that surrounds this topic and the confusion as to which actions constitute what offenses. Common definitions now create understandable expectations of how service members are to continually apply the Military Services' core ethics and values to prevent assaults.

Pre-deployment training has also been directed. It will help protect service members when they deploy by providing refresher training on prevention techniques as well as identification of available support systems and resources. It also serves to inform them of the cultural mores of the country they are deploying to as well as any coalition partners they will be working with.

Additionally, the Department has mandated pre-command training. This is critical as commander support directly impacts the success of local programs. This training focuses on the distinct duties and responsibilities that enable commanders to establish an environment that prevents sexual assaults.

